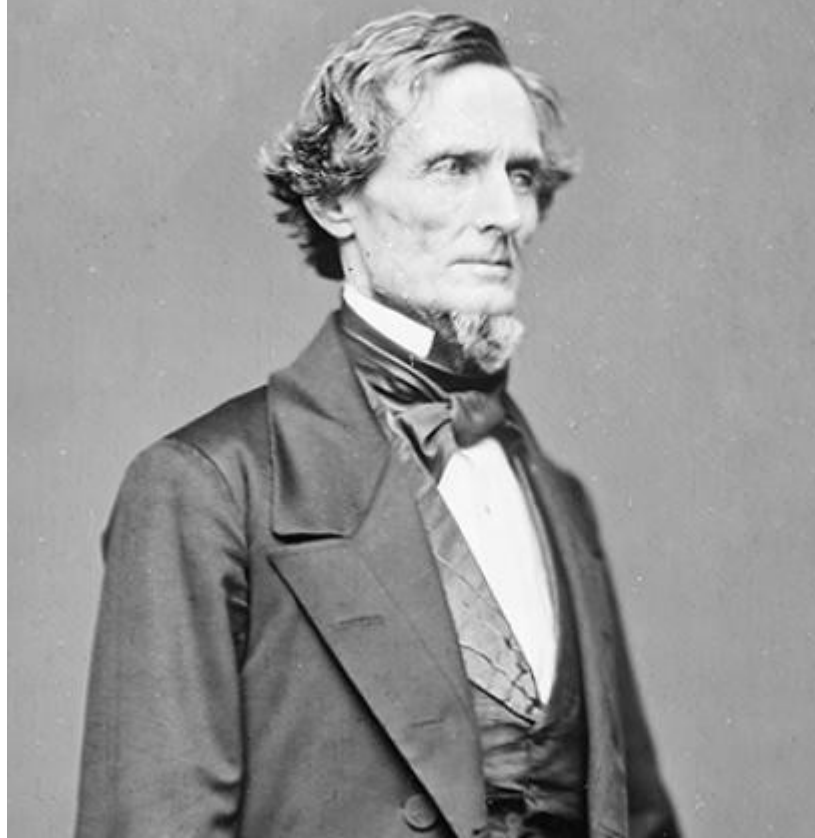
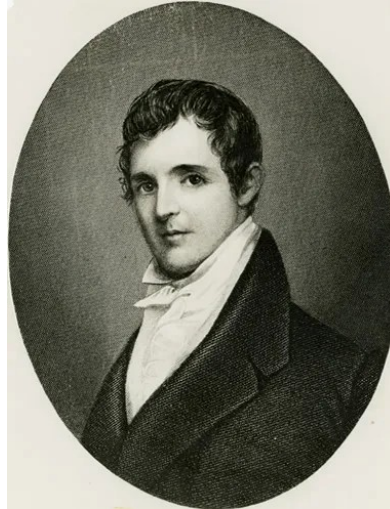


Jefferson Davis The Forgotten Hero



Early Life

- Davis was the tenth and youngest child of Revolutionary War soldier Samuel Davis and his wife Jane Cook Davis.
- Grew up on his families plantation in Mississippi.
- His older brother Joseph had a profound influence on his later life, especially on how he would eventually run his own plantation
- Davis attended college in Kentucky at Transylvania.
- But, once he was accepted to West point he immediately transferred there.



West Point

- Davis was accepted to West Point in 1824.
- Was only considered an adequate cadet, that would change in the coming years.
- Took part in the Egg Nog Rebellion (Riot) 24-25 December 1826. Was one of the leaders.
- In the mandatory Constitution class the book, “A View of the Constitution of the United States of America” by William Rawle, was used from 1825-1840.
 - It stated that the States joined the Union willingly, and as free republics could leave the Union willingly.
 - When this happened, it says that a soldiers duty and loyalty then was remitted to his state.
- Graduated in 1828, 23rd in his class of 24.
- Afterwards served in the Black Hawk War in 1832.
- Left the Army in 1835.

Plantation Life

- Davis became a cotton planter, building Brierfield Plantation in Mississippi.
- Davis married Sarah Knox Taylor, daughter of general and future President Zachary Taylor in 1835.
- The Davis plantation was run quite different then what we hear of plantation life being. Had up to 113 slaves.
 - He was quite kind to his slaves, they generally worked 5 hours a day.
 - They were educated.
 - Had their own garden.
 - Often were allowed to eat as much as they wanted.
 - When a slave got in trouble, the slaves themselves would hold a court, with slaves on the jury to decide guilt or innocence, and the punishment to be carried out.



The Mexican War

- In 1845, Davis married Varina Howell. During the same year, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives, serving for one year. Resigned to fight in the Mexican war in 1846.
- Davis served as the commanding officer of a volunteer regiment.
- Hero at the Battle of Buena Vista.
- Scaled the defensive walls of Mexico City.
- Was offered the rank of Brigadier General after the war, but turned it down because he was appointed to the US Senate in 1847.



Secretary of War

- In 1853, President Franklin Pierce appointed him Secretary of War.
 - While Secretary of War Davis accomplished many things.
 - Building the Union Aqueduct. Still used today to bring water into Washington D.C.
 - Sent General McClellan to Crimea to study the tactics of the Russian and British armies.
 - Formed what we call today the light infantry based on their findings.
 - Worked directly in the Colt factory to make new firearms to better suit the light infantry concept.
 - Formed a school to teach officers to do land surveys.
 - Sent teams out West to survey much of the unknown lands the US owned.
 - Rebuilt many dilapidated forts; built new forts out West.
 - And many other infrastructure projects.

The Coming Storm

- After leaving as Secretary of War he went back to the Senate.
- Davis argued against secession from the union, in multiple speeches.
- When his state of Mississippi seceded from the Union. He did as his training at West Point told him to do he went with his state.
- He was chosen by the Southern representatives to give the farewell speech to Congress.
- At the Southern Convention that was held to appoint the Confederate government he turned down being President 5 times, but to stop the infighting he accepted the 6th time. He was hoping for a military command.



After The War

- Davis was captured on May 9th, 1865.
- Imprisoned at Fort Monroe for two years.
- During his imprisonment, there were constant talks of trying him for treason and complicity in Lincoln's assassination
- The Pamphlet, "Is Davis a Traitor?" by Albert Taylor Bledsoe was written and circulated.
 - It was made into a book in 1907, and expounded upon which can be found here:
<https://ia800209.us.archive.org/30/items/isdavistraitoror00bled/isdavistraitoror00bled.pdf>
 - It included many thoughts by the Founding Fathers on the idea of Secession and its legality.
 - Pointed out the use of "A View of the Constitution of the United States of America" by William Rawle and what it had to say.
 - And highlighted many other inconvenient facts, which run on for 282 pages. The history we haven't been told about secession.
- A group of the best legal and political minds of the time met in 1867, and it was decided that a trial could not be held, because as the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Salmon Chase stated at the meeting:
 - "If Jefferson Davis be brought to trial it would convict the North and exonerate the South."

After Imprisonment

- After being released Davis traveled extensively between England and the US.
- He sometimes gave paid talks but turned down most.
- Although offered many job opportunities he turned down most, for a variety of reasons.
- In January 1877, the author Sarah Dorsey invited him to live on her estate at Beauvoir, Mississippi, and to begin writing his memoirs.
- He entertained many guests there, including many of his former slaves who had stayed in contact with the family.
- His first book, "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government", was published in 1881. Followed by "A Short History of the Confederate States of America."
- He attempted to get back into politics, but because he remained an Unreconstructed Confederate, he was legally not allowed.
- He died in November 1889, his funeral was attended by many politicians from all over the world and it was estimated that over 200,000 people from all over the South also showed up to mourn his passing.